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May 9, 1969

MEMORANDUM:

TO: P - Mr. Robert J. McCloskey

FROM: L/C - Ernest L. Kerley

SUBJECT: U.S.S. Liberty Claims

Attached is the text of a press release on the payment by the Government of Israel of the U.S.S. Liberty personal injury, medical expense and personal property claims (TAB A). We see no objection to its immediate release. The basic text was previously cleared by your office and sent to the Government of Israel for comment in Department 069564. (TAB B). The present text reflects certain changes suggested by Israeli officials and transmitted to the Department in Tel Aviv 1709. (TAB C). We have not accepted their suggestion that we refer in the first paragraph to the "tragic error in which the U.S.S. Liberty was attacked". Instead we have deleted the words "by Israeli naval and air units" from our original text and refer simply to the "attack" as we did in the May 1968 Department press statement concerning payment of the death claims.

In paragraph 5 of Tel Aviv 1709 it is suggested that the Department indicate, with regard to the remaining claim for damage to the ship, that the claim is under discussion with the Government of Israel and we do not wish to give any information about it at the present time. In view of the importance of the ship claim ($7.6 million), I hope P will handle any inquiries about the claim in this manner awhile the claim remains under discussion.

Also attached is a cable to Embassy Tel Aviv, for your clearance, replying to Tel Aviv's 1709. (TAB D).

Attachments: As stated
L:L/C:ELKerley:cdj:5/9/69
Clearances: NEA/IAI - Mr. Lissfelt NEA/P - Mr. Glenn Smith
Navy JAG - Captain Marsh (substance)

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

FOR THE PRESS

Payment of U.S.S. Liberty Claims

On April 28, 1969 the United States Government received $3,566,457 from the Government of Israel in settlement of certain claims arising out of the attack on the U.S.S. Liberty on June 8, 1967. The amount received represents payment in full of the following United States claims:

A. 164 claims totalling $3,452,275 on behalf of the members of the crew of the U.S.S. Liberty who were injured in the attack:

B. A claim for $92,437 for expenses incurred by the United States Government in providing medical treatment to the injured men:

C. A claim for $21,745 for expenses incurred by the United States Government in reimbursing members of the crew of the U.S.S. Liberty for personal property damaged or destroyed in the attack.

Distribution to the injured men of funds received in settlement of their claims is now in process, and will be completed in a few weeks.

On May 31, 1968, the Government of Israel paid in full claims totalling $3,323,500 on behalf of the families of the 34 men killed in the attack.

The only unsettled claim arising out of the attack on the U.S.S. Liberty is the claim for damage to the ship, which remains under discussion.

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